

Promoting Integrated Territorial Development

MetroHUB Planning Studio

A Capacity Development Activity for Ugandan Government Officials

Arua, 20 - 22 March 2018

MetroHUB

UN HABITAT
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**MINISTRY OF LANDS, HOUSING
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**



Group picture at the Workshop Venue, Arua, March 2018 ©UN-Habitat

INTRODUCTION

The MetroHUB Planning Studio in Arua, Uganda (20 - 22 March 2018) - a pilot capacity development activity for fostering an integrated territorial development approach - was initiated and supported by the Ugandan Support for Municipal Infrastructure Development (USMID) Program. The Planning Studio was conceptualized by UN-Habitat in cooperation with the Politecnico di Milano and was supported by Makerere University and the University of Botswana. It was based on the UN-Habitat MetroHUB approach, combining capacity development on planning, governance, finance and socio-environmental considerations with identifying tangible “acupuncture” projects at territorial and metropolitan scale. By fostering communication across different planning levels (national and local level), including between different stakeholders (civil society, private sector and academia) and promoting planning across sectors and administrative boundaries, the MetroHUB Planning Studio promotes integrated territorial development and supports a metropolitan approach that includes not only the city of Arua, but also the peri-urban and surrounding rural areas.

Arua was selected as the pilot city for this innovative concept because of its strategic location (near the border of South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)) and its development potential due to natural resources make it one of the strategic cities for Uganda's future development. The large influx of refugees in the region also makes immediate actions necessary.

Important investments in infrastructure (such as an airport extension to create an international airport and a railway line connecting Mombasa, Kenya, to the DRC) that are already planned will strongly impact the city. To harness the opportunities for Arua, an integrated territorial development approach which underlines the importance of cross-sector collaboration and coordination is crucial for sustainable economic development as well as also social development. Environmental considerations need to be included at all planning stages to ensure that natural resources such as water (the River Nile) and soil are protected; economic growth will create jobs and improve livelihoods for the population in the West Nile Region.

During the MetroHUB Planning Studio, participants from different government authorities (national and local level) conceptualized project proposals that consider not only planning, but also finance, governance and socio-environmental aspects. “Thinking across sectors, across administrative boundaries and across planning levels for sustainable development” was key for the interactive and interdisciplinary group work during the Planning Studio.

METROHUB PLANNING STUDIO IN ARUA



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1. BACKGROUND

Uganda's urban population will increase from around six million people today to over 20 million people by 2040, with an urbanization rate of 5.2 per cent per annum. This high rate is already increasing the demand for urban services, housing and jobs. Urban areas in Uganda play an important role in economic development given that they provide economies of scale, agglomeration and localization; they also provide efficient infrastructure and services through density and concentration of transport, communications, power, human interactions, water and sanitation services, thus making them centres for major economic activities in the country. Whilst urban areas in Uganda do present the best hope for growth and opportunities, they are already constrained as a result of high population growth that is not commensurate with the available infrastructure, service provision and employment creation.

Investments in urban infrastructure and services have not kept pace with the growing demographic and economic importance of urban areas, resulting in the growth of unplanned settlements, urban poverty, inadequate basic urban infrastructure and services, and leading to a deteriorating urban environment. By 2014, the night population in the 14 Ugandan Support for Municipal Infrastructure Development (USMID) municipalities was estimated to be 1,156,882, and by June 2016 there were 41 municipalities with a total night population of 3,249,609. The regional distribution of these fast-growing urban areas will catalyse rural-urban migration. In addition to the increasing rural-urban migration, it is expected that the population growth will be faster than the capacity to plan.



Arua Street life © UN-Habitat

Policy makers need to act now to ensure that this rapid urbanization is managed well and can contribute to Uganda's sustainable economic growth while also fostering social inclusion and protection of environmental assets. The Uganda National Urban Policy was approved by the Ugandan Parliament in June 2017, providing a policy framework for guiding the planning and management of urban areas for Uganda. This policy framework is intended to ensure that urban areas will become more attractive, productive and competitive to enable the country to attain resilient, functional, sustainable and liveable urban areas by stimulating a balanced

urban growth while also ensuring the transformation of the rural economy to slow the rate of urban sprawl. The Ugandan National Urban Policy is now in the implementation phase and will be among the country's major tools to reduce the challenges created by rapid (and unplanned) urban growth; it will also foster social, economic and environmental development in many regions of the country.

One of the components for the implementation of the national urban policy is the extension of the USMID Program (see Box 1) for another five years (2019-2024).



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